



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Nashville, TN

COMMUNITY CONTEXT	
Community population	658,602
2014 PIT (overall homeless)	2,236
2013 CoC award	\$3,234,487
2013 WIA formula grant allocation	\$8,382,700 (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth)
Current unemployment rate	6.4%

DESCRIPTION

There are two distinct initiatives in Nashville working on the elements of employment and housing as strategies to prevent and end homelessness. How's Nashville is a local campaign created collaboratively with the 100,000 Homes national effort, while the Nashville Workforce Network is a local network of employment providers and advocates. Both the How's Nashville campaign and the Nashville Workforce Network have strong commitments to collaboration and innovation. However, few formal links exist between the two, limiting the ability of either initiative to support the other.

Since summer 2013, Nashville has heavily invested in a Housing First strategy that targets people experiencing chronic homelessness by increasing access to permanent housing and wrap-around case management. How's Nashville partners have increased the housing placement rate by over 250% and have continued to prioritize permanent housing and support service resources to people experiencing chronic and vulnerable homelessness each month.

The primary service offered to individuals identified through the How's Nashville program is subsidized housing and case management support. While case management supports are helpful in maintaining the lease agreement and preventing returns to homelessness, they vary in their focus on employment.

Similarly, the Nashville Workforce Network brings together government, non-profit, and private partners focused on workforce development. The purpose of the Network is to improve agency capabilities and resources that help vulnerable populations enter the job market, sustain employment, and advance in their careers.



The 90 member organizations range from the Workforce Investment Board to Goodwill Industries, Continuum of Care partners, and other smaller organizations that have population-specific workforce services that include prisoner re-entry, veteran's services, substance abuse, and domestic violence populations.

The Nashville Workforce Network maintains the strength and expertise within its membership to address the barriers to employment that the How's Nashville program has identified in its service population. However, the Workforce Network and How's Nashville have not yet forged formal ties. Following the summit it is our goal to engage with the community in uniting leaders of these respective local initiatives and learn from federal partners and leaders of programs in peer communities. In addition, we wish to develop a joint, local initiative that serves jobseekers experiencing homelessness that have high barriers to employment.

COLLABORATION

Both programs are partnerships between area nonprofits, public, and private sector stakeholders and divisions of Metropolitan Nashville Government. The two organizations are mutually supportive with a dedicated position for the Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board on the Homelessness Commission and How's Nashville partner organizations as active members of the Workforce Network. The Nashville Workforce Network is a volunteer-driven collaborative organization that relies on the expertise and time of member organizations. How's Nashville uses a collective impact approach to help partner organizations set goals collectively and coordinate housing access through a mutually reinforcing plan of action. Each organization uses their strength and expertise to reach the goal of increased housing placement and stability.

For example, Nashville partners contribute the following:

- The VA and local PHA (MDHA) provide housing subsidies through VASH and Section 8 programs
- Nonprofit homeless service organizations identify the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness using a common assessment tool and assist with the collection and submission of required paperwork and identification documents.
- Mental health organizations, the VA, and nonprofit organizations provide support services in the home once housing is obtained.
- The Metropolitan Homelessness Commission provides "backbone" support to the effort by using staff time via local dollars to guide the vision and strategy.



Funding sources for all of these activities are truly mixed. Most outreach and housing navigation is funded by federal PATH funds and private funds that are raised by individuals and local foundations. HUD issues housing subsidies and support service funding is a mix of Medicaid dollars and local funds from the county and private foundations. Once individuals have obtained permanent housing, move-in costs are covered by private dollars raised from the community as well as federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Both the Nashville Workforce Network and How's Nashville have partners who are part of the Continuum of Care.

INNOVATION

Both the Nashville Workforce Network and How's Nashville represent collaborative approaches to issues that had previously not been tackled collectively. The How's Nashville campaign recruited traditional homeless service providers, various organizations who provided subsidized housing and housing vouchers, and public and private sector apartment management companies. The focus of the initial work was to streamline the application and waiting list processes, recruit housing providers who were not traditional players in the world of homeless services, and to combine the two approaches into a more efficient way to move people off the streets into permanent housing.

Simultaneously, the campaign coordinated case management resources that were already available through mental health services, Veteran's Affairs, and other similar population-specific providers. The combination of permanent housing and case management has led to an 80% retention rate after a year. Further details are available at www.howsnashville.org.

The Nashville Workforce Network grew out of the Mayor's 2010 Poverty Initiative. Its focus as a Network is not on direct service, but rather on collective impact and capacity building. In collaboration, the Network has focused on professional development for members, many of whom are the only staff person focused on workforce development within a larger, more population-focused organization. The Network has identified effective practice in workforce development from around the country and facilitated trainings and opportunities for implementation and shared learning.

Network-wide communication allows for job fairs, employment-readiness workshops, and other opportunities that organizations provide their clients to be opened up to the collective client base, expanding the impact of a single organization and expanding meaningful opportunities for job-seekers in the community. The Network includes 90 organizations, over 150 individual members, and a collective reach of over 23,000 people in the Middle Tennessee area. More information is available at www.nashvilleworkforcenetwork.org.



FUNDING FOR INITIATIVE/PROJECTS

How's Nashville currently leverages local funds with HUD and Veterans Affairs funding as well as charitable contributions for the housing. Case management is supported by the VA, Medicaid, local government, federal government, and private funds. Local dollars provide \$405,000 in gap-filling case management for those participants not eligible for the other supports. Federal CABHI (through SAMHSA/HHS) will provide \$1.5 million in support services for veterans and people experiencing chronic homelessness over the next three years. In addition, Nashville's PHA and VA prioritize approximately 600 HUD-VASH vouchers and up to 216 Section 8 housing vouchers. A flexible fund of approximately \$100,000, which is raised by the local community, pays for move-in costs such as security deposits, application fees, debts to PHA's and utility companies, and utility deposits.

Furthermore, up to \$200,000 in federal CDBG funds also pay for eligible move-in costs. Currently, the program does not utilize WIA funds.

Many Nashville Workforce Network members serve homeless job seekers through a variety of funding sources that include WIA, VA, and privately raised resources. The Network utilizes Local Workforce Investment Board staff for administrative support. The Network has also been the recipient of a Bank of America grant for a small pilot project that implemented a collaborative approach to job fairs in an effort to expand the opportunities for participants without doubling the workload of the workforce staff members in small organizations. However, the Network is wary of applying for grant funds that might otherwise have gone to member organizations to expand or support direct service. All other Network activities are supported through agency volunteers.

Currently, neither the How's Nashville program nor the Nashville Workforce Network have initiative-funded programs specifically targeting homeless job seekers.

CONNECTION TO EMPLOYERS

Within the Nashville Workforce Network, employers are engaged both as members of the organization itself and as key informants and resources for member organizations. The Network provides quarterly opportunities for service providers to engage in sector-specific conversations with hiring managers regarding their targeted new hires, necessary skill sets, hiring practices, and core industry values. Network members are then able to translate that direct access to employer expertise into meaningful program adjustments and skill building for clients. Sectors that are engaged include Hospitality, Commercial Construction, and Public Works.



DATA and RESULTS

Nashville's HMIS captures all project specific data required for applicable federal funding sources via Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as for its federal partners, Veterans Administration (VA) and U.S. Department of Health of Human Services (HHS). Client level data is stored within our local HMIS that records client universal data (i.e. demographic data), performance data (housing stability, income measurement and mainstream benefit access) as well as the history of data collected on clients.

This includes earned income data for clients who maintained, increased, or gained income while in a given CoC funded project during the designated operating year. It also tracks loss of income or no access to income.

How's Nashville partners use a common assessment tool called the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) and a Match Initiation Form that collects data to determine the most appropriate housing intervention as well as the future tenant's preferences that help match the person to vacant housing. Data from these two tools clarify the demand for housing and employment as well as the challenges.

The following is self-reported data from 2014:

- 117 (31%) of the 373 households reported \$0 income per month. Of the 117, 96% are receiving food stamps, 39 reported a felony conviction (10 of 39 were violent felonies, 4 reported being registered sex offenders, and 15 are on probation or parole.
- 256 (69%) reported income. Of those that reported income, average monthly income is \$515, almost half (130) receive disability benefits from SSA, 13 reported selling *The Contributor* (a local homeless newspaper), 76 reported temporary or full-time work, 5 reported only child support, 2 reported VA benefits, 108 report having a felony conviction (43 of 108 were violent felonies), 11 are registered sex offenders, and 32 are on probation or parole.

Between July 2013 and June 2014, approximately 1,196 persons were served within our HUD continuum, 842 of whom were adults. (*This excludes two Domestic Violence transitional housing programs.*) Of the 842, 486 “stayers” (those remaining in any of the reported programs by the end of the operating year) were specifically measured in the employment Income category. 138 or 28% of the “stayer” adults either maintained or increased their income during the operating term. More specifically, 95 or 19% of the adult “stayers” increased their earned income or gained it entirely. From the 842 adults, 320 exited one of the CoC funded projects. Of the 320 “leavers,” 215 or 67% either maintained or increased their source of employment income. Of the 215 adult “leavers,” 173 or 54% increased employment income or gained it entirely.



It is important to note that Permanent Supportive Housing programs represent a sizeable portion of the programs evaluated in our Annual Performance Report. The population served within these programs is more apt to gain access to other forms of income, such as SSI or SSDI. In looking at how many sources of overall income were calculated at the end of the operating year, 235 adult “leavers” had access to more than one source of income, including one recurring earned income source. For adult “stayers,” 456 adult “stayers” had access to more than one source of income, of which 171 had access to more than just one recurring earned income source.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REPLICATION

How’s Nashville and the Nashville Workforce Network are highly replicable approaches to as examples of collective impact and collaboration. Both organizations provide examples of the potential impact of multiple organizations working together towards a common agenda. As such, they require little infusions of new cash or program infrastructure to create and sustain systemic change.

COMMUNITY CONTACT

Ellen Zinkiewicz, Director of Youth and Community Services Middle Tennessee Workforce Investment Board/Nashville Career Advancement Center
ellen.zinkiewicz@nashville.gov